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THE

HISTORY AND THEORY

OF

REVOLUTIONS.

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THE
HISTORY AND THEORY OF REVOLUTIONS.

THE present generation in this country have heretofore known revolutions only as matters of history, or as events occurring in some distant part of the world. We have read of them, heard of them with the hearing of the ear; but now a revolution, or an attempt at one, has become to us a present and most visibly real fact. The word has always had, for the public ear, a portentous and startling sound. We have been accustomed, and justly so, to connect with revolution the idea of civil war, as the world has known it hitherto, with all its atrocities and horrors; its wild, uncontrollable phrenzy, setting man against man, and community against community, with all the ungovernable fury of a tempest; its fratricidal hate and bloodshed; its unleashing all the worst passions of the human heart, which, in their wild and lawless revel, respect not the rights of man or the virtue of woman; its smoking and ruined cities, its pillaged towns, its deserted and untilled fields, and all its sanguinary paraphernalia of dungeons and scaffolds, guillotines and gibbets, armies and battle-fields. Perhaps we have generally derived our ideas from the French Revolution of 1792, which was a familiar fact to our fathers in their younger days, and of which some fragments of the nameless horrors, and wild excesses, and almost incredible atrocities, were wont to be rehearsed in

youthful ears round many a family hearthstone, and to be perused as amongst the earliest lessons in history.

And now *we* are in the midst of a revolution! *We*, in this republican America, in this lauded nineteenth century,—*we*, devoted to the arts of peace, engrossed in the pursuit of gain, covering the seas with our commerce, dragging forth the treasures from the mountains, chaining the continent together with our iron bands, tilling the broad acres of our wondrous and fruitful country,—*we*, in the midst of a revolution? It is even so! And have we before us the *possibility* of an experience such as other nations have tasted when overtaken by revolution? No man can say that we have not! When once the social structure moves upon its deep foundations, upheaved by the throes of civil convulsion, no prophet's ken can unerringly foretell where the movement will stop. All our predictions and confidences have failed us. In the very hour of our youthful and boastful self-glorification, when we were proclaiming on every hand our confidence in our republican experiment, and demonstrating its stability and permanence, we are called to go down into the very valley of the shadow of death, to have the thick mists settle upon our path, and the ground to quake and gape beneath us, and the very air to be filled with discordant voices of alarm and doubt, of malediction and terror.

It is well; then, that amid the fearful possibilities with which we are environed, we can look back, and calmly, in the light of history, study the general laws and workings of such national exigencies in the case of other nations. For history, whilst it never exactly repeats itself, is a perpetual prophecy of its own evolution. It is well that we can look back and see other nations, much weaker than our own, survive much worse disasters than ours, as yet, appears to be, and even flourish in the midst of them. It is well that we are permitted to observe how the turbulent and brutal passions of men, let loose like hell-hounds of havoc and lust by the tocsin of war, are allayed by the gentle wand of peace, and how in due time all the virtues, and graces, and amenities of social life resume their accustomed channels. It is well for us that, amid our fears, we can look

back and see, through the wildest surgings of national convulsion and deadly strife, the genius of freedom, both civil and religious, rising radiant and beautiful, like beams from the ocean spray. It is well that we can announce to ourselves, as a clear deduction of history, that no great vital interest of mankind, pertaining to Christianity or civilization, has ever been harmed by the ravages of war, or the heavings of civil commotion. The pole-star of human destiny shines always clear above the storm and tempest. God has provided, infallibly, that no local disturbances, as they seem to us, shall interfere with the essential facts or grand results of his moral government. To suppose otherwise, would be to suppose that creation was a freak, and providence a jumble of accidents.

Let us look, then, if possible, a little into this matter of Revolutions. Let us examine their facts, find out if possible their theory, and trace some leading outlines of their history—keeping in view always the special relations of our investigations to the case of our own civil troubles. And it is no affectation to say, that when a man ventures to attempt such a theme, at such a time as this, it behooves him to gather all his best thoughts about him; to weigh well the theories he presents, and the judgments he renders; and to point the eye of inquiry and hope to that only which will not finally deceive.

What, then, is Revolution? What is its definition? What its theory? What has been its history? When is it justifiable? When probably successful? These are questions which may indicate the general drift of inquiry which is before us.

And, first, as to the *definition*. Revolution may be defined to be a radical or organic change in the constitution of government, accomplished either peacefully or violently. Or it may be defined to be the successful resistance to established authority, by which a new form of authority is instituted and established. Or it may be defined to be the passing away of an old form, a worn-out institution, and the uprising of a new one, to enter on its career of development and history. In all these definitions, the fundamental conceptions are the same. They are those of destruction or decay, as preceding new-creation, or new-formation of the dissevered elements. In the idea of revo-

lution, the most prominent conception is that of overturning or overthrowing, by which society is, to a certain extent, resolved into its original elements, and made to take new shape and form new combinations. The idea is derived from the motion of a wheel, in which every particle is constantly returning to the point whence it started—suggesting the fact, that in the great movements of history, and the life of nations and civilizations, as in the astronomical universe, there is a constant tendency in all things to return, at least in the direction of the point of departure.

Revolution, to be proper and legitimate, and fulfil the part assigned to it in history, must be a movement against that which is old, worn-out, unnatural, unreasonable, or oppressive. When a government or an institution which may have met the wants of men in other ages or other circumstances, is no longer able to adapt itself to the changed circumstances and larger wants of another age, but has become, on the contrary, oppressive and burdensome, brooding, like a horrible nightmare, upon the rising energies and aspirations of a new-born era, then has the moment come for the great tongue of time to strike the hour of revolution, and suddenly armed men spring from the earth like the dragon's teeth of Cadmus, a shout of defiance and vengeance rends the air, and the new-born giant rushes on to his work of destruction.

Revolution must not be confounded with *rebellion* or *insurrection*. Rebellion, as the term indicates, is merely armed resistance to authority. Insurrection is merely a rising up against authority. Neither need necessarily lead to revolution; although they are often the first symptoms of its coming, the first stages of its progress. But rebellion or insurrection may be the result of caprice, of passion, of ambition, of jealousy, or of mere local causes, and they speedily perish. They may be like the mad tiltings of Quixotic knights against windmills and airy giants, in which they get only scars and bruises in return. But when rebellion is successful, and insurrection puts down the authority against which it rises up, then they attain to the dignity of revolution. Rebellion is often revolution begun, revolution is rebellion accomplished.

Having thus defined the term and the thing, it may aid us in examining the theory of revolutions. What is the philosophy of these great throbs in the life of every nation, these convulsive struggles and throes, which form so marked a feature in the life of every people who have attained a nationality since history began? And how comes it that the race does not seem to be outgrowing these portentous phenomena, even with the aids of the highest civilization and the purest Christianity? Whenever we find a fact so universal and perpetual as this, we may be sure that its cause lies deep, and its theory is bound up with the organic laws, and perhaps the very vitality, of the race.

Let us turn to nature, and study her lessons. Everywhere revolution—according to the fundamental conception of it as defined above—appears as an essential and healthful part of her vital processes. In all the universe, so far as man knows it, there is nothing at rest. Everything is in motion. As the gentle Cowper beautifully expresses it,

“Constant rotation of the unwearied wheel
That nature rides upon, maintains her health,
Her beauty, her fertility; she dreads
An instant’s pause, and lives but while she moves.”

All nature is a perpetual circulation of matter, and in this perpetual motion the leading factors are the antagonistic forces of life and death, growth and decay. Old forms fade, wither, die, dissolve, that new forms may start into life and beauty, only to fade, wither, die, dissolve again. The fruit ripens, decays, falls to the earth, and carries with it the vital seed, which, under favourable conditions, springs up a new, fruit-bearing tree. Life, death, birth, decay, beauty, deformity, growth, dissolution, are the alphabet with which nature makes up her wondrous story—the figures which move in her mysterious drama.

“My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle which still goes on
In silence round me; the perpetual work
Of thy creation finished, yet renewed
For ever.”

Nature, then, is full of revolutions. Revolution is the law of her life, the music of her mighty march. Spring, summer, autumn, winter, day, night, cold, heat, are each respectively a revolution on the other.

Now a law, analogous to this which thus pervades all nature, is, or seems to be, the law of national life. If we fail to see at once the accuracy or precision of its analogy, it is only because its cycles are so great, and its periods so long, that we can take but a few of them within the scope of our vision. It is only by a careful study of the whole history of national experience, that we arrive at the comprehensive generalization, that revolution is a perpetual agency in national development.

The educated mind of the age is becoming possessed of an ever-strengthening conviction that this universe, both material and moral—the universe of matter, and of men—is governed by laws, in a much wider as well as more minute sense than is ordinarily comprehended,—laws so steady and accurate that in a given period, amidst manifold variations, they will give us the same general average of cold and heat, of sunshine and cloud, of rain and drought,—laws so steady that in a given population, in ordinary circumstances, the same number of persons will die, the same number be born, the same number be married in a given period,—laws so steady, though obscure, that in the millions of births which occur annually, the proper numerical relation of the sexes is preserved,—laws so steady, though inscrutable, that in a given population, in ordinary circumstances, the same number of crimes will be committed, of each particular kind, the same number of punishments for the crimes will be suffered, and the same number of good deeds of virtue, benevolence, and charity, will be performed,—laws so steady, in short, that, in the same circumstances, masses of men will feel alike, and think alike, and act alike. The elements and laws of human nature, whilst exhibiting all the diversity of manifestation, within certain limits, which prevails in the physical world, are as steadfast and permanent in their essential characteristics as the laws of the material universe. Hence the perpetually recurring phenomena of history, that power, long wielded, begets oppression; oppression, long

endured, begets resentment and resistance; and resistance begets revolution. So long, then, as these things are so—so long as human nature remains unchanged in its essential features—must we regard revolutions as indispensable stadia in the path of national progress, indispensable factors in the problem of human destiny, indispensable evils, if we prefer to call them so, with which mankind must be afflicted—as indispensable as tempest and lightning, hail and snow, in the natural world.

It is one of the amiable weaknesses of many good people, to affect to think, in their horror of incidental evils and wickedness, that they could govern God Almighty's moral world better than he does himself—at least that they are competent to instruct him how to govern it better. We refer to the absurdities and impicties so frequent in prayer. We opine it is better to adapt ourselves to things as they are, or must be, or may become, and to believe that the mystic weaver who sits above the clouds understands from the beginning the texture and colour of the web he is weaving, though he may not always throw the shuttle just as we might desire.

The *theory* of revolutions then is, that with all their hideous and gory surroundings, they are the inevitable throes and pangs by which the old, the worn-out, the useless, the oppressive, are overthrown, and the new and hopeful introduced. They are always the symptoms of vitality seeking to assert itself—of life warring with death.

Revolution may be accomplished peacefully, without disturbance or violence; but this is not the ordinary law of its operation. It is the exception, not the rule, in national affairs. The old *may* pass away, and the new come in without jarring or discord, like the soft twilight of evening settling gently over the bed of the king of day; but the change is oftenest made with confused noise and garments rolled in blood.) When the gigantic monarch of the forest has fulfilled its cycle of centuries; when its heart of oak has imperceptibly dropped away in decay, leaving but a thin, hollow shell to bear the weight of the limbs and trunk above, and to withstand the pressure of the storm, it is still possible that it may drop away piecemeal, one limb after another, until nothing be left but the

splintered and hollow trunk; but the much greater probability is, that at a certain point of its decay, on a stormy winter's night, the wings of the tempest will seize it in their sweep, and as the wild chorus howls among the branches, the ancient trunk will crackle and snap, and the huge hulk of the giant of centuries fall to the earth with a crash that startles from their coverts the denizens of the forest.

Before passing on to the history of revolutions, it may be well for us to give some attention to the question, When is revolution justifiable? When is a people justified in taking the assertion of their inalienable rights into their own hands in a revolutionary way? When may existing governments or institutions be justly overthrown, if need be, by force? It is manifest that this is a very serious question. It runs the dividing line between wicked rebellion and righteous revolution. It is, moreover, a very practical question, one which must be decided by almost every generation of men in one form or another. It is a question which has been often and much discussed. Philosophers, statesmen, lawgivers, kings, poets, orators, reformers, theologians, have all had occasion, with such ability as they may have had, to discuss it, for the benefit of themselves or others. Monarchs trembling upon their thrones, statesmen called to guide the helm of state amid stormy seas, philosophers in the seclusion of their studies, poets and orators firing the popular heart under the goading wrongs of centuries, reformers cleaving asunder the abuses of corrupt, disjointed times, and pious divines, earnest pastors of churches, having, in some measure, the care of the consciences as well as the souls of their flocks, have all, at times, by the necessities of their positions, been compelled to form for themselves a theory, and proclaim a doctrine, designed either to disprove entirely the right of revolution, or to assert it, and to define the limits within which it may be exercised.

If we accept the definition and theory of revolution which we have endeavoured to give, it is evident that the right of revolution does exist in every society. It is a latent ingredient in every political state, to be called forth by a necessity more or less stringent, according as the antecedents, and whole concatenation of circumstances, historic and ethnic, may require.

If this is not so, then despotism is the true theory of human government. If there is no right of revolution, then humanity is helplessly prostrate at the feet of any existing authority. If there is no such right, then any crowned Nero, or Caligula, or Philip II., may ride iron-shod over our liberties, may fetter our consciences, prescribe for us our religion, confiscate our property, make conscripts of our sons, and concubines of our daughters, and no murmur of injustice, or imprecation of wrath, must be heard. But this cannot be. Humanity was not made to be thus the plaything of despots. Readily as we admit the divine constitution of government, and admit even the divine sanction of kingly or monarchical government, for certain ends, and under certain limitations, we assert with equal readiness the divine origin of the rights of man. The one is a divine factor, which works over against and modifies the other. When one divine factor becomes untrue to its origin, another, equally divine, takes up the divine work of destroying it, and vindicating its own sacredness. In other words, when government, through human wickedness, becomes false to itself, and divorces itself from its own divinity, in whole or in part, then the divine afflatus blows the trumpet blast of revolution. And thus history ever oscillates between the forces which play upon it on this side and on that.

But however men may theorize, they never fail to exercise the right of revolution when the necessity of the case demands it. Like the peace-principles of the Quakers, their anti-revolution speculations give way before the pressure of actual fact. The instincts of mankind are stronger than their doctrines. "Oppression maketh" even "a wise man mad." There is a point, even, at which the timid stag, hunted over mountain and valley, and finding the yelping pack coming closer and closer upon his failing steps, turns panting and furious at bay, and plunges his antlers into the nearest foe.* There is a right of revolution, then, which God never intended should be taken from men, until he brings in that more perfect constitution of human affairs, when there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain.

* Rev. George Frazer, General Assembly of 1861.

But admitting the right, we return to the query, When is its exercise justifiable? Perhaps no specific and definite answer can be given, suitable to all cases. Each case must be decided on its own merits, and, as a matter of fact, each case will decide itself in its own issue. But we may venture some general suggestions.

It is evident that as revolution is a last resort, an extreme measure, an ulterior remedy for the ills of the body politic, it ought not to be resorted to for light or trivial causes. The means must hold proper relation to the end. A man may take life in self-defence, and stand unimpeached of justice; but he cannot do so to avenge a slight indignity. Revolution can never be justified as a matter of caprice, or of mere party passion, or the ambitious schemings of demagogues, or the desire of mere local or sectional aggrandizement. There must be the endurance of actual wrongs—not merely the imagination of prospective wrongs—but the actual endurance of goading and painful wrong. A man cannot justly take the life of his neighbour under the apprehension that at some future time his own may be imperilled. And as an extreme measure, its proper place is after all others have failed. A last resort must not be a first resort. Every pacific measure must be tried, every peaceful remedy must be attempted and found unavailing, every possible effort must be patiently and perseveringly made to secure justice and right, and found futile, before an oppressed people can rightfully arise in their might, summoned by a call more potent than the bugle blast of Roderic, or the great iron tongue of the bell Roland in Ghent, to shake off the shackles of perverted authority, and overthrow the strongholds of abused power.

There is always a strong presumption in favour of established institutions—a strong presumption in favour of existing government. The fact that it is, is *prima facie* evidence, until the contrary is proved, that it ought to be. Although despotism, for instance, or monarchy, is always more or less of an usurpation—rests, first or last, upon usurpation—yet it becomes the means or occasion of government—it actualizes government—and the usurpation disappears as the history moves on,

and in manifold circumstances it may be best adapted to the wants of men. And in a rude and unprepared age, when men need to be under tutors and governors, the man would be justly branded as a wild enthusiast and madman, who should raise the standard of revolution, and rally men around the chimera of an ideal and impossible republicanism, based upon the abstract rights of man.

There is one general rule or formula which has been often referred to and quoted since our own civil troubles commenced, which is, perhaps, as just and comprehensive as any that can be found as a criterion of revolution. It is this;—*that the actual evils endured must be so great, that the evils of the revolution will be less: or that the ultimate good to be gained must be so great, that the aggravated evils of the revolution may be endured for the sake of it.* Before, however, entering upon this survey, we would remark that the question, when a revolution is profitable, is a matter of conscience, rather than of expediency. The great principle conservative of human rights and of the well-being of society, is, that we are bound to obey God rather than man. When any human law conflicts with the divine law, it ceases to bind the conscience. That divine law is revealed, not only in the Scriptures, but in the constitution of our nature. Whether the human does conflict with the divine law, is a question for the individual conscience. In cases of such conflict, it is our duty to refuse obedience, as did the apostles, but not necessarily actively to resist. Revolution, or the overthrow of established government, therefore, is not justifiable on caprice, or at the discretion of the people; nor on account of unwise or unequal legislation; nor simply for the object of benefiting the condition of the people. Rebellion, or the attempt to overthrow a legitimate authority by force of arms, is justifiable—1. Only when obedience to that government is disobedience to God. 2. When the evil admits of no other remedy. 3. When there is a fair prospect of success. False as is the principle that ability limits obligation in other spheres, in that of external action it is self-evidently true. A child is not bound to resist a ruffian about to commit murder. A strong man is bound. Whether the Scotch were right in resisting, by force of arms, the attempt of Charles II.

to impose prelacy upon them, or the English in opposing James II. in his efforts to introduce Popery, depended on the two questions—1. Whether the evil could be otherwise prevented; and 2. Whether they had the power to prevent it. If they could do it, they were bound to do it. It is doubtful whether anything more definite than this can be given, and with it we pass on to consider the history of revolutions, and to draw some contrasts between some of the great leading revolutions of modern times, and the present Southern rebellion in our own country.

History has been defined as “philosophy teaching by experience.” In other words, the actual is always the best measure of the possible. And, indeed, for certain practical purposes, a thorough, intelligent study of history is worth more than all the metaphysical speculation that has accumulated since the days of Adam. History holds up the mirror to man’s nature, and reveals to him, by the reality of what has been, the possibility of what may be, nay, of what must be; for the laws of human action, and the operation of human motive, are as inexorable as the laws of matter, and the forms and shapes of the future already lie dimly, yet definitely, outlined in the forms and shapes of the past. If, then, we are able to lay the phenomena of this Southern rebellion side by side with some of those great movements in the past which are appropriately styled revolutions; if we are able to compare their antecedents, their motives and causes, their general phenomena and general features, it may enable us, in some measure, to determine whether this civil trouble which is upon us is a revolution, or only a rebellion.

It will not be possible, in the limited space of a single article, to attempt a general history of revolutions. We might as well attempt a history of the world. Suffice it to say, that every great nation, both ancient and modern, without a single exception, so far as we know, has repeatedly felt the earthquake shocks of revolution. All have, at times, trembled to their very centres, and, in many instances, the whole fabric of government has gone down, as with a crash that startled the world, into dismemberment and chaos, and from amidst the

fragments a new form has arisen, to gird itself with youthful vigour and hope for the career of national greatness.

It will serve our purpose to select three or four prominent examples from comparatively modern history, with which to institute the comparison. These examples will be the revolution in the Netherlands in the latter half of the sixteenth century, which gave rise to the Dutch Republic; the French Revolution of 1792; the Cromwellian Revolution in England in 1649, and to these we will add the American Revolution of 1776. This Southern movement, by the magnitude it has assumed, and the claims it has put forth, must either take its rank along with these in the annals of the future, or sink, crushed and broken, into the oblivion in which lie the countless abortive rebellions and insurrections of which history has scarcely deigned to make chronicle.

We will endeavour to present some salient points of comparison and contrast.

First, and chiefly, as to the provocation or evils endured, which excited to armed resistance to authority. Let history remove the mask of delusion under which our Southern brethren have so hastily rushed to arms. If they have thought themselves aggrieved, let them consider what others have borne before venturing into the abyss into which they have so recklessly plunged. In the case of the Netherland Revolution, the story of wrongs, long and patiently borne, is one of the most heart-rending and monstrous which has been left us in all the annals of time. On the abdication of Charles I., his son Philip II. succeeded to the crown of Spain. Few characters in history present all the worst features of the despot in so intense a form. Besides the crown of Spain, he inherited a hereditary sovereignty in the Netherlands as Duke or Count of Holland and Flanders; a sovereignty, however, limited and defined by constitutions, and charters, and privileges, granted and confirmed to the Provinces long before, and making the government as strictly a constitutional monarchy as is that of England at this day. During his first visit to the Netherlands, a summer was spent in festivities; the opulent cities of that great hive of industry vying with each other in the magnificent banquets, and cavalcades, and ceremonies, by which he

exchanged oaths of mutual fidelity with them all. He swore unreservedly to support and maintain inviolate all the constitutions, and charters, and privileges, which had been confirmed to them by his predecessors, and by which his sovereignty was limited and his government regulated. And now, monstrous and difficult of belief as it may seem, we are forced to the conviction that all this was mere dissimulation and sham. From that very moment the whole policy of his government, backed by the power of Spanish armies, was to trample upon all these constitutions, and charters, and privileges, to treat them as nullities, to punish as a traitor any one who dared insist on their sacredness, and to erect over the doomed Provinces an authority dependent on nothing, limited by nothing, defined by nothing but his own personal, absolute, despotic will. To accomplish this purpose, deception and dissimulation were resorted to which seem scarcely human. With fair promises, and specious protestations and blandishments, he lulled the suspicious and restless victims of his tyranny, whilst his private correspondence shows that his deliberate purpose was to bind upon their limbs more firmly the fetters of political and ecclesiastical slavery. State papers and despatches were sent to his regents to be published as instructions from the throne, when the same courier carried private messages to the same officials instructing them to do just the reverse. Netherland noblemen were invited to Spain on missions of confidence, and kept there under strict surveillance, and in due time poisoned or assassinated, and messages of condolence sent to their friends, informing them that they had died peacefully and trustfully believing that God had mercy on their souls. The Counts of Egmont and Horn, two leading Netherland nobles, were invited to Brussels to share the hospitality of the newly-arrived Duke of Alva. The revelry of a merry banquet lasted late in the hours of the night, after which the two nobles were invited to a private interview with the Duke. Scarcely had they entered his room when they were arrested and sent to close confinement, and shortly afterwards publicly beheaded in the horsemarket. Troops of foreign soldiery overran the country, and overlooking every important city was a powerful citadel erected, to overawe the turbulent populace. All this

was done with deliberate purpose, and prior to all provocation, except that which arose, at the several steps, from protests and complaints against the violations of ancient rights. He levied upon them taxes and imposts the most arbitrary and monstrous, and he punished, with all the exquisite arts of torture, all deviations from the established religion. The Inquisitors whom he sent amongst them assumed a license, and practised a scrutiny and cruelty in the discovery and punishment of heresy, most frightful to think of. And yet the Netherlanders scarcely thought of revolution! Some local scenes of turbulence and resistance occurred, but it was not until every right had been trampled in the dust, every feeling of honour and patriotism outraged, every hope of relief by constitutional methods dissipated, that the sagacious and heroic William of Orange was able to organize a combined and effectual resistance. And even that had to be done under the fiction of making war, as Philip's stadtholder, upon Philip's governors, for the vindication of the ancient laws. And when a down-trodden and insulted people did at last thus arise, and not pray, but demand a recognition of their ancient charters, he answered them by a visitation of the most horrible cruelties which the imagination can conceive. He sacked their cities, he devastated their fields, his brutal soldiery butchered their old men and children by thousands, and ravished their women by hundreds in the churches and market-places. By a sweeping decree he condemned the whole population of the Netherlands to death, every man, woman, and child, with some few exceptions, which were named; so that his officials could hang up, without question or form of trial, any one whom they suspected of having an aspiration of liberty in his breast. Here, then, was an occasion for revolution. Nay, all history would have sanctioned a revolution in the Netherlands long before it occurred. When laws which protected the citizen against arbitrary imprisonment, and guaranteed him a trial in his own province,* which forbade the appointment of foreigners to high office, which secured the property of the citizen from taxation except by the representative body, which forbade the inter-

* Motley.

meddling of the sovereign with the conscience of the subject in religious matters,—when such laws had been subverted by Blood Tribunals, whose drowsy judges sentenced thousands to the scaffold and the stake without a hearing,—when excommunication, confiscation, banishment, hanging, beheading, burning, were practised to such enormous extent, and with such terrible monotony, that the executioner's sword came to be looked upon as the only symbol of justice,—when cruelties too monstrous for description, too vast to be believed by a mind not familiar with the outrages practised by the soldiers of Spain and Italy, were daily enacted,—then, surely, if ever, might the shrill voice of humanity shriek out from amid her blood and tears, and call upon her mail-clad warriors to avenge her wrongs. And we would say, in a word, by way of application, that if our brethren in the Southern states had endured a tithe, nay, a hundredth part, of the wrongs which the patient Dutch of the sixteenth century had inflicted upon them, they would be *justified* in this rebellion.

Let us look now at the second great example named, the French Revolution of 1792. This is spoken of distinctively as *the* French Revolution, because of the magnitude of its results, and the terrific interest of its attendant circumstances, although there have been several revolutions and changes of dynasties in France within living memory. It is common for many persons to think and speak of the French Revolution only as a volcanic outburst of infidelity and bloodshed. They think of it only as a Reign of Terror, in which such demons of impiety and cruelty as Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, rode triumphant upon the wave. In looking at the excesses to which the movement ran, they lose sight of the central current of the movement itself. The rebound is always in proportion to the pressure in the opposite direction, and if the French Revolution ran into lamentable and disastrous excesses, it was mainly because the freedom which it inaugurated was rescued from the thralldom of such an intolerable oppression, its excesses assisted also by the mercurial temperament of the French people. But the Reign of Terror was not the French Revolution. The French Revolution was a tremendous and overwhelming revolt against the combined tyranny of a feudal nobility, a dissolute court and

clergy, and an absolute sovereign, each forging a separate chain by which to bind and oppress the mass of the nation. The feudal system of the Middle Ages, which was a good thing in its time, a good thing in times when every individual man needed a protector, and was fain to attach himself to some powerful chieftain who was able to secure him in his rights of person and property, and for which protection he was willing to render service of labour or arms—this feudal system reached its culmination in France, and in the eighteenth century had become the embodiment of insupportable abuses. The feudal lords, who owned most of the soil, were as about one to two hundred and fifty of the population; and yet so absolute and minute, so detailed and specific were their exclusive rights, that the two hundred and fifty, or the greater part of them, were little better than the slaves of the one. To cite a single and apparently trivial instance—and we cite it as a representative instance—they possessed the exclusive right to keep pigeons, and it was their privilege to let them loose upon the fields in sowing time, and the toiling peasant dared not raise a finger in resistance or protest. As owners of the soil, they absorbed nearly the whole productive wealth of the nation, leaving the peasant and artisan scarcely the necessities of life. This vast income they expended in show, and in profligate and dissolute ways, and yet refused to contribute their just proportion to the expenses of government, causing the taxes to fall with inconceivable severity upon the already oppressed labouring and other classes. They obstinately resisted all reforms, and clung with ferocious tenacity to their hereditary privileges. Add to this the equal tyranny of an absolute sovereign, whose prodigal and dissolute court, whose expensive wars, and whose wasteful squandering of the public money upon favourites and parasites only added to the heavy burdens already entailed by the feudal nobility; and add, also, the officious and intermeddling presence everywhere of a thoroughly debased and mercenary, yet powerful clergy, oppressing the conscience as well as the estate, and we have an abundant occasion, if history can furnish one, for a thorough and radical revolution.

From beneath this incubus of ages, the enlightened mind of

the eighteenth century in France sprang with a tremendous rebound, and the world shook with the concussion. Out of the chaos emerged, amid blood and fire, and the wild shouts of a freed and almost frantic people, first a brief and delusive republicanism, afterwards a healthier and better form of constitutional monarchy. Its odious features and its so-called failure notwithstanding, France owes an incalculable debt to her great revolution. At the time of the revolution, all the privileged classes combined—and there were numerous grades of them—constituted but one-thirtieth of the population; the other twenty-nine thirtieths, composed of peasants, artisans, merchants, manufacturers, scholars, philosophers, men of science, lawyers, physicians, were what was called the Third Estate, in other words, the *people*, who then possessed neither rights nor privileges as citizens, but who have been a power in history ever since.

And we would say here again, briefly, by way of application, that if the Southern states of this Union had been oppressed with burdens and disabilities half as heavy and odious as those laid upon the unprivileged Third Estate of France before the revolution, they would be *justified* in this rebellion.

We pass now to the third historical example named, the revolution in England under Cromwell.

This had for its basis two fundamental ideas, viz., resistance to the encroachments of the royal prerogative, and the assertion of the rights of conscience. During the two previous reigns of James I. and Charles I., the most strenuous and persevering efforts had been made to extend the royal prerogative, so that even the Magna Charta of King John, the sheet-anchor of constitutional liberty under monarchical government, was in danger of being superseded, or its effect seriously thwarted. And the religious persecution had also been most stringent, showing the determined purpose on the part of the sovereign to crush the religious sentiment of the nation into the Procrustean form of an established hierarchy. Against this double usurpation, joined with a most flagrant deterioration of the public morals, the spirit of liberty and the awakened conscience of the nation revolted, and the whole fabric of monarchy went down, for a time, before the psalm-singing legions of the great

Oliver. And though the change was but temporary, and England soon returned to the flesh-pots of her kingly Egypt, yet the effects of it are most marked and salutary to this day, not only in English history, but in the history of religious liberty throughout the world. "Freedom to worship God" was its watchword, and its legacy to our own time.

And we will add here, too, that if the rights of conscience had been trampled upon in the South, if there had been an attempt to establish a religious inquisition, or a censorship in the worship of God, and all other means of redress had failed, they would have been *justified* in revolution.

We will glance now at our fourth and last historical example, the American Revolution of 1776.

An attempt has been made by the Southern leaders and newspapers, to claim the advantage of this great example, which is a matter of common history and common pride with us all. They say to us, that if the colonies could justly assert their independence of the mother country, then "we can with equal justice claim and assert our independence of you." But let us observe that the cases are by no means similar in their essential features. In the first place, there is no parallel in the character or nature of the two cases. The American revolution was not a revolution in the sense in which the Southern rebellion is necessarily a revolution, if it attain to that dignity at all. It was no organic disruption of society, no radical disintegration of the framework of government. It was a mere separation of certain governmental dependencies from a distant sovereignty, with which, though largely affiliated in origin and language, they had scarcely anything in common in respect to governmental polity and tendencies. The colonies were no incorporated, functional members of the British government, and their severance left that government whole and sound in all its parts. Not so with our Southern states. They are part and parcel of the organic whole of the nation. They were, to a large extent, agents and actors in all the functions of government. In fact, they had the lion's share, both in the honours and emoluments of office, since the formation of the government. They are separated from us by no natural boundary. We are visibly bound together by those grand

physical features of the continent, which are more potent than compacts and constitutions, and which declare unmistakeably the organic oneness of our national life. Between the waters which leap from the frozen fissures of the Rocky Mountains, and those which spread their calm bosom to the tropical sun of the Gulf of Mexico, there stretches a continuous, unbroken relationship, by virtue of a great law of nature, which can only be interrupted by the destruction of the great Father of Waters himself. So the natural oneness, the organic wholeness of our national existence, can only be destroyed by the violation of the great manifest laws of our being. Hence the revolution which our Southern patriots, as they call themselves, would justify by the example of that of our fathers, is a far more radical and destructive revolution, and ought to be sanctioned by more potent and manifest causes and provocations. But in this respect, also, the example fails them. The colonies revolted against grievances more tangible and real than those which the heated passions or base designs of partisans and demagogues have used to inflame the deluded people of the South. They were subjected to an unnatural and oppressive system of taxation—unnatural and oppressive because forced upon them entirely from without, and for purposes in which they had little interest. They were subjected to taxation without representation, whilst our Southern revolutionists have had, to some extent, representation without taxation. They were denied trial by jury on their own soil for certain offences. They were made to bear the burden of large standing armies for foreign purposes. They were cramped and harassed in their whole internal policy by the domineering interference of a distant and selfish sovereignty. They rebelled, not from caprice, or passion, or ambition, but from necessity. And we hesitate not to say, that if our Southern brethren could put forth a Declaration of Independence which would stand the scrutiny of fact, such as was put forth on the 4th of July, 1776, they would be *justified* in this rebellion.

But, instead of all this, what have we? What have been their grievances? Have they been hanged and burned, drawn and quartered, like the patient Netherlanders? Have their ancient constitutions, charters, and privileges, been trampled in

the dust? Instead of this, they have been continually strengthened by new guaranties, and conciliatory propositions were thrown into the very jaws of the revolt. Have they been held under hard taskmasters, and bound to unrequited toil, like the Third Estate of France before the Revolution? Have they been persecuted for conscience' sake, like the Puritans of the reign of James I.? Have they been oppressed and goaded by unthinking tyranny, like the American colonists? Instead of all this, or any of it, what have been the facts? They have been nursed and fondled by the nation. They have shared the choicest of her gifts. They have given shape and form to her general policy. They have had the most extraordinary concessions made to them. So long and patiently did the North yield to their ever-enlarging demands, that they themselves instinctively scorned us as dough-faces. The general government has always been specially and paternally tender of their welfare, and even of their prejudices. Many of the leading measures of governmental policy in years past have been taken specially in their interest. They have been nourished and cherished into greatness, and wealth, and prosperity, all of which they have hazarded in the vortex of revolution, lured by a chimera of no tangible outline or actual form!

We confess that they have not been free from grievances, as viewed from their own peculiar stand-point; not grievances, however, growing out of the public policy or acts of the government, but rather out of the opinions and temper of the people of the North. The chief of these grievances has arisen from what all Americans in former years supposed to be one of their inalienable rights, viz., freedom of speech and freedom of discussion. We can readily imagine how goading it must have been to a Southern slaveholder, who had fully possessed himself with the idea, not only of the rightfulness and beneficence of slavery, but of its vast superiority to every other system as a basis for civilized society, to hear it discussed and questioned in the North, to hear it denounced, in the language of Wesley, as the "sum of all villainies," to see its enormities exposed in the vivid light of fiction, to see its workings held up in the cold, calm glare of statistics, to hear its merits in a moral view tested in the crucible of the universal conscience, in

short, to have it thought about, and talked about, and written about, badgered and beaten hither and thither with the remorseless battledores of logic or no-logic, by those who, in his view, had nothing to do with it—all this, we say, we can readily imagine to have been excessively annoying. But is this, or anything like it, to justify revolution? Then, indeed, must human society be bound with ropes of sand. Are we to put the moral sense of all Christendom under the ban because it is against us? Rather should this lead us to question the infallibility of our own conclusions. Is this the sort of wrong, long and patiently borne, which demands that society shall return to chaos and reorganization? Assuredly not, or society is a fiction, and history a myth. Our Southern brethren have never been oppressed, or grieved, or wronged, in any such sense as has fired the hearts and nerved the arms of revolutionists in days of yore. What shall we say then? What does history say, speaking to us by example, her voice pealing through the long and gory ages of the past? Her utterance is this, if we have interpreted it aright, that, judged by all the past, tested by all the criteria of great and successful revolutions in other lands, measured by the motives and provocations which have goaded men in other years to deeds of violence and bloodshed, this Southern rebellion is the *most causeless revolution* ever attempted in the annals of time! It is, in fact, a revolution, not against oppression, not against injustice, not against civil or religious disability, but a revolution against the census and against the ballot-box. It is a convulsive grasp after waning and departing power.

If we turn now to the second member of our definitive limitation of the justifiableness of revolution, viz., that “the ultimate good to be gained must be so great that the aggravated evils of the revolution may be endured for the sake of it”—we will find that the present rebellion must suffer in the comparison with either of the four great revolutions we have indicated. They all had a purpose, an object, an ultimate good, toward the achievement of which they tended and struggled, and the realization of which was worth any amount of privation and suffering within the limits of human endurance. They were all manifestly moved by those great world ideas which work them-

selves out into great and permanent results in the history of mankind. The Netherlands Revolution was a contest in the interest of civil and religious liberty throughout all Christendom—in the interest, in other words, of Protestantism, which was then engaged in a life and death struggle for its own existence. In that little, amphibious corner of the north of Europe, the genius of human freedom stood at bay, and defied the power of absolutism in church and state, and its victory in the strife rescued European civilization from the clutch of despotism, and the human conscience from the thralldom of priestly usurpation. The Reformation was there on trial for a history or a grave. There can be no doubt that a different result would have been followed by the subjugation of England, the arrest and ruin of the Reformation in Germany, and thus all Europe, and perhaps America too, would have been at the feet of two monster powers, the empire of Spain and the Papal throne. In such a cause, even such scenes as the sack of Haarlem or the siege of Leyden can be endured, nay, must be endured, if humanity is true to its own exigencies.

The French Revolution was a contest in which the essential rights of man were involved as against unrelenting oppression. Any one who makes himself at all familiar with the condition of France before the Revolution, must see at once that the time had fully come for a thorough and radical reorganization of the whole framework of society. The old, effete, and burdensome institutions of a former era were tottering to their fall, or pressing like an incubus upon the awakened energies of a great people. There was no ordinary possibility that the old order of things could continue, unless the whole nation sank into torpor and death; or that it could be changed, save by the sweeping charge of the hurricane. Events are stronger than men; and when an unseen power from beneath impels the movement, men ride but as straws upon the wave. Whenever a revolution is impelled by the quickening pulse of new-born national life, then no sacrifice is too great, no endurance too severe, to purchase the boon of success.

The Cromwellian Revolution had for its object the conservation of the constitutional rights of the realm, the purification of the social and political fabric, and the defence of the rights

of conscience. Its ultimate good, for which it plunged the English nation into revolution, has been sufficiently attested by its influence upon Anglo-Saxon history and morals everywhere, and upon the subsequent history of the British monarchy. No price is too dear to pay for that which mankind cannot afford to lose.

The American Revolution was the realization of the dream of a great nationality—or rather the necessary and irresistible outbirth, sooner or later, of an instinctive feeling of nationality. The most superficial survey of the continent, the most meagre comprehension of the true extent of their possible possessions, and the field for empire opened before them, must have begotten in the advance minds of the time the first feeble pulsations of national life, the first rising aspirations after social autonomy. And these pulsations and aspirations must have been perpetually strengthened by every new discovery of the vast possibilities before them, and the incapacity of the old order to meet the requirements of the case. It seems hardly within the ordinary range of conjecture to suppose that the proper and natural development of this continent could have been reached as a mere dependency of the British crown, or as the fragmentary dependencies of several European sovereignties. And as the vast possibilities of their country's future would glimmer faintly, even, before the vision of the patriots of the Revolution, they might well count no cost too dear, no sacrifice too great, to bestow such an inheritance upon their children.

But what, now, of this Southern Confederacy? What ultimate good do they propose as an offset to the aggravated evils of revolution? What great world idea moves them to do, and dare, and suffer? Perhaps some of their ambitious leaders have had their dreams of empire, too. Perhaps visions of expansion, and conquest, and illimitable grandeur, have floated before their waking hours. Perhaps they have been bold enough, in their speculative flights, to project for themselves a nationality, based distinctively upon slavery, which would astonish the world by its successful working and practical results. It is a bold idea, certainly, but whether it be a living thought-birth of the genius of history, or an *ignis fatuus*, luring to ruin, time alone will determine. Doubtless at this moment, to

the moral perceptions of the vast majority of Christendom, it seems more like the dream of a maniac. But is this the ultimate good they propose? We think it is. It appears, with more or less distinctness, in the published speeches of their leading men. It is seen in some of the features of their Constitution itself. Instead of one great nationality, unique, compact, yet multiform in its minor features, truly *e pluribus unum*, combining the restless energy and world-conquering power of the sons of the frosty North, and the fervid imagination and generous impulses of the children of the sunny South; yielding the corn of the broad prairies, and the cotton and sugar of the warm sea isles and savannahs; sweeping on in one great, broad stream of social grandeur; chiming in the ear of history like a full diapason, in which all the tones, from deepest bass to lightest alto, are heard—instead of this, they propose to give us two great nationalities, each one-sided and narrow in its features, each at fault for want of the complement of the other, perhaps each watching with jealous and hostile eye every movement of the other; or, worse still, if their theory of government be consistently held, they propose to give us a dozen or more petty sovereignties, discordant and jarring, and doing their best to devour one another. This is the *ultima thule* of secession. This is the final end to which they look to justify the horrors of revolution. For this, is it, that they have pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour? So it would seem.

What, then, is the special and particular significance of this Southern rebellion? What leading idea lies at the root of it? Into what formula may we compress its essential, central meaning? By what definition may we limit and distinguish it, so as to embody its heart and core, its real purpose and final aim? We answer this: It is the struggle of a *false civilization* for supremacy, or at least independence.

All high civilization rests upon labour as its natural and essential basis. There must be a broad and permanent basis of toil, on which to rear its lofty and graceful proportions. Labour is the true measure of value; hence labour is the parent of wealth. The earth must be made to yield her increase, her mineral resources must be dragged forth from their

rocky beds, and the myriad sons of labour must change, modify, refine, and convert to the uses of man, the agricultural and mineral products of the earth, or mankind can never rise above the condition of roaming shepherd tribes or savage hunters. Now, while all agree in these general premises, the distinction between the Northern and Southern conception of civilization is this—that in the North we believe this labour ought to be voluntary and free, incited by the hope of reward, stimulated by the lure of gain, made steady and reliable by the hope of personal independence and of constantly rising to a more desirable elevation in the social scale. This the Northern mind believes to be the true theory of the highest civilization; to be most consonant with the universal kinship and ultimate perfectibility of the human race, or any part thereof; and to be most nearly allied to the conceptions of the founders of this great republic of the setting sun. Whilst, on the other hand, the ruling sentiment of the South is, that this labour ought to be a matter of property; that it ought to be owned, like the soil or the mines, and that it ought to pertain to a distinct and separate class, working under compulsion, and for ever bound to that estate of toil—at least unable to rise above it by any provision of the system itself. This is their conception of the true relation between labour and capital, between labour and civilization. And it may be readily conceded that, in certain contingencies and relations of races, this theory may be accepted as a provisional arrangement. We are no such advocates of the abstract rights of man as to suppose that those rights may not at times be held in abeyance, by necessity or expediency. And we think the fact is indisputable that, until recently, the great majority of Christian people in the South held to this view of the case, *i. e.*, that slavery was a provisional arrangement, and not a finality; in other words, they held to the theory of expediency, or the “toleration theory,” as opposed to the “sin theory” on the one hand, and the “Divine right theory” on the other, according to the classification of Dr. Frederick B. Ross. And we think the fact equally clear, that this has been the position of the Presbyterian church from the beginning—a position from which the advocates of the “sin theory” on the one hand, and the advocates of the “Divine

right theory" on the other, in vain attempted to drive or seduce her. And had the mind of the whole country been content to repose in this position, had the storms of fanaticism not howled from the North, nor an equally fatal madness pervaded the South, this trouble, humanly speaking, would not have occurred either in church or state. Had the mind of the whole country rested in the doctrine of the fathers, that slavery was a provisional arrangement, a local or municipal institution, to be continued, modified, or removed, as circumstances indicated, by those who were responsible for it, the North would have been ever ready, as we believe the great mass of its people have ever been, to concede to the South, under the Constitution, all that pertains to their peculiar institution, and the Southern people would not have been changed into fanatical slavery propagandists. But it is manifest that the doctrine of expediency, or the toleration theory, has been steadily, and of late rapidly, giving way in the South, supplanted by a type of thought more affirmative and positive in the interest of slavery—a type of thought which accepts it, not as a provisional arrangement, but as a finality, the divinely ordained relation between labour and capital, and the permanent basis of the highest civilization.

Now we will readily admit, that if the doctrine of the unity of the race could be dispensed with; if the proper humanity of the labouring class in the South could be set aside, this Southern theory of the relation between labour and civilization might be readily acquiesced in by the whole world. But how it can be held consistently with the doctrine of oneness of blood and of origin between the races, we cannot imagine; and we will venture to predict, that if this Southern rebellion is successful, the doctrine of diversity of origin will be ably urged, from Southern sources, upon the attention of mankind, before the close of the century.

This theory, then, of the relation of ownership between labour and capital, has given type to Southern sentiment, Southern policy, and Southern civilization. And the political leaders, warned by the ever-widening disparity revealed by each returning census, have been making a bold push to secure the supremacy of this theory, as the controlling policy of the

government. No other rational interpretation can be given of the efforts at legislation of certain Southern leaders, aided by their Northern abettors, during the last ten years. And when the great and populous North—great and populous, because of its free labour and wider civilization—demurred, and in fact at length flatly refused, and by virtue of its superior ability to vote, placed a man in the presidential chair, as the representative of a different policy, then the tocsin of revolution, under the specious plea of secession, was sounded, and the great body of the South, much against the judgment and will of a large mass of her people, was at length whirled into the abyss. Such then, as we believe, is the true, distinctive character of this movement. Stripped of all its accessories, it is the struggle of a false civilization for supremacy; and failing of that, for independence.

Many other topics of this prolific subject might claim attention. We might go on to speak of the probabilities or improbabilities of the success of this revolution, and of the manner in which it has been initiated and conducted. We might speak of the pretended right of secession, as of necessity the disintegration of all government, and hence so utterly fallacious as a governmental theory, that no government could possibly embody it as a radical part of its organization. We might speak further of the effect this great crisis may have upon the future structure and policy of the government, and show that whether it terminate one way or the other, it must beget organic changes in our political fabric. We might speak also of the effects which the war may have upon us as a people, and show by the analogies of history, that great wars are not always of necessity great calamities upon a people; that by a merciful arrangement of Providence, the people, except in the immediate scene of conflict, go on sowing and reaping, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, as though nothing of the kind were occurring. God has provided that the great framework of society shall stand unharmed amid these local tumults, just as the universal frame of nature stands intact when earthquakes rock and tempests blow. But we must forego these topics.

There is but one other belonging to this general class of

topics, to which we shall revert. It is, that this civil commotion is not to be the ruin of our American civilization, nor the death of the Saxon race on this continent, nor the wreck of the hopes of mankind, so widely centered upon this great experiment of popular government. Our civilization is too young to be blasted, our nation too young to die. What the precise issue of our present troubles will be, no one can tell. What the specific solution of the great national problem forced upon us will be, no prophet can foresee. But that there is a solution awaiting us—a solution in the interest of civilization, and of Christian, human progress—no one, we think, can doubt. Shall we believe that the Saxon race, with its wondrous vitality, its adamant vigour, its unbroken energy, its power to overcome obstacles, to surmount difficulties, to adapt itself to circumstances, to solve questions of the practical intellect, and to make a virtue of any necessity which may be forced upon it? Shall we believe that this Saxon race, at the present stage of its development, in the fulness and exuberance of its bounding life, is about to commit suicide? Shall we believe that this youthful nationality is about to be wrecked for ever? That would be to belie all history. No man who believes that history has a meaning can entertain such a conception for a moment. Not more surely do the arranging of the letters of the alphabet, by intelligence, indicate certain words and thoughts, than does the alphabet of the Divine Providence, arranging itself now for three hundred years—yea, perhaps we may say truthfully, for eighteen hundred years—indicate another issue than that for our national problem and our Christian civilization. A predestined purpose will infallibly guaranty the means thereto. To the Christian who has the eye of his faith fixed upon the shining portals of the heavenly city, there is a firm and sure pathway of stone, even through the midst of the Slough of Despond. So the man who sees in the elements and antecedents of our national existence a purpose worthy of history, worthy of God, and essential to mankind, will believe that a solution of our present troubles is awaiting us, even though it should come to us from beyond the stars! Though our good ship of state may have got among the breakers, yea, though roaring Scylla may be heard upon

the one hand, and devouring Charybdis may yawn upon the other, yet so great is our confidence in the strength of the helm, and in the skill and purpose of the *Divine* steersman, that we believe it will plow safely through the surging foam, and yet ride the tranquil bosom of the wave, like a thing of life!

And we may further briefly express our own unfaltering conviction, that the only pathway of safety and existence for us now, is that of vigorous and deadly warfare. The malignant virus of a causeless and wicked rebellion cannot be purged from the body politic by mild sedatives. It needs blood-letting. In the language of an eminent Southern leader, "the argument is ended, we now stand to our arms," and we will not lay them down until the sword has fulfilled its mission, and wanton armed resistance to constituted authority be driven from the land. When that is done, we may hope to see a reconstruction, if not a restoration. "When wild war's deadly blast is blown," we may hope to hail again the return of "the piping times of peace," when, according to rare old Ben Johnson, "every man can stand under the eaves of his own hat, and sing his own song." And let us hope that we will emerge from this conflict chastened and sobered, made wiser and better, more charitable and appreciative of each other; prepared to bury old feuds, and extinguish old animosities, and to turn joyfully to the grander and more genial conquests which have distinguished us hitherto—the triumphs of the arts of peace—"the winter of our discontent made glorious summer, and all the clouds that lowered upon our house in the deep bosom of the ocean buried."

A word, in conclusion, as to our foreign relations. It has been manifest from the beginning, that one of the great perils growing out of this rebellion was the danger of our becoming embroiled with some of the other nations of the earth. That peril, as an ever-existing fact, is becoming every day more apparent. We are gratified, however, to observe a strong disposition on the part of the government, to avoid a hostile entanglement with foreign nations, by every means in its power, consistent with the preservation of national honour. In the progress of this struggle, a thousand complications and

unforeseen casualties must arise, which will demand the wisest statesmanship, and the utmost self-control, to carry us safely through, without offence to foreign powers. It is not our purpose to speculate upon the probabilities or improbabilities of a war with England, or any other foreign power, or to conjecture the course and ultimate result of such a war, or to endeavour to forecast the wide-spread complications to which it might give rise, both on this continent and in Europe. This is not our province. Suffice to say, that if it does occur, it will probably make history enough to occupy the pens of several generations.

It is our purpose, rather, to say that there is one thing which we should assuredly be taught by the menace with which England preceded and accompanied her negotiations with us on the point so recently in dispute,* and that is, that we should henceforth make ourselves more powerful, both by sea and by land. It is manifest that the millennium is not yet upon us. We are still in the "state militant." A few years ago, our popular orations and much of our literature was rife with "the peace-tendencies of the present age." But the dream has fled. The nation that beats its swords into ploughshares before the time, will have to forge new ones, or be dashed to pieces. There is no advantage in deluding ourselves with impracticable theories. Peace congresses, Quaker principles, and millenarian preaching may be studied as auspicious harbingers of a promised future, but for present use they are not to be accounted of. It is clear that the old governing principle of all the ancient world, viz., *force*, still holds largely in human history. To be able to enjoy peace, we must be able to make war, and have the world so understand it. There are some questions in the entangled relations of national affairs, which cannot be settled, as mankind stand now, save by the stern arbitrament of the sword. Hence we should put our military organization on a basis to contend with any in the world. We should increase, vastly and permanently, the defences of the country, and greatly extend the facilities for the military education of our people. If the millions of dollars

* The seizure of Mason and Slidell.

which we have spent in the last twenty-five years in foreign purchases to gratify the luxurious tastes and minister to the vanity of our people, had been spent upon the defences of the country, England would not have preceded her official correspondence with us by brandishing her mailed fist in our face.

We are not unmindful of the danger of large standing armies; but we should not alarm ourselves by parallels which are destitute of force. A large standing army in the hands and under the pay of a selfish despot is one thing; a standing army which is part of a great people is another thing. Our military organization should form an integral part of our people, and with the powerful popular tendencies which have become ingrain to us, working irresistibly towards the realization and maintenance of republican institutions, we can see nothing alarming in a standing army of sufficient magnitude to secure order at home and respect abroad.

Especially does it behoove us, as speedily as possible, to create and maintain a powerful navy. The main strength of most great nations lies upon the sea. Ever since the discovery of the mariner's compass, the great maritime nations have ruled the destinies of the world. When Venice, in her palmy days, led the commerce of the world, it was essential to her that she should be great at sea as a naval power. When Spain was the first power in Europe—when she held Asia, Africa, America, and the half of Europe in her giant grasp, it was because she was mistress of the sea, and her commerce and her treasure-ships poured into her lap the gems of the Indies and the gold of Peru. When her great Armada threatened England in 1588, the poetry and literature of the time abounded in metaphor, describing old ocean as groaning under the cumbrous weight. When the Dutch Republic, with her small, dyke-bound territory, made herself respected as a power in the ends of the earth, it was because her amphibious sons were at home upon the vasty deep. The bold Admiral who tied a broom to his mast-head, was a representative man. England has held her rank amongst the nations mainly by the power of her navy; and France, though confessedly the first power in Europe in military operations on land, is scarcely

inferior in her naval strength. We should henceforth determine to surpass them all. A nation possessing more sea-coast than any other in the world—whose shores are washed for thousands of miles by two great oceans on opposite sides—a nation whose commerce is whitening every sea, and is destined to extend into every inlet and harbour of the habitable globe—a nation possessing harbours on whose broad bosoms all the argosies of Venice could ride in safety—such a nation ought to possess a navy inferior to none other in the civilized world. In fact, the mind of the country cannot but stand appalled at the utterly defenceless condition in which we have been, as against attack by any of the great maritime powers of Europe.

Such are some of the lessons which this rebellion and its attendant circumstances should teach us. It was doubtless necessary for us to learn these lessons. It was assuredly better we should learn them now than later in our history, and perhaps the particular method taken to teach us is, on the whole, the cheapest and best. And when we shall have learned them, and acted on them practically, we shall stand firm, calm, self-poised, in the simple majesty of power beneficent to bless, yet terrible to strike, guaranteeing rational liberty to the subject at home, yet enforcing the claims of constituted authority; compelling, by the unanswerable arguments of rifled cannon and iron-bound ships, an honourable recognition and respect abroad; and, having got beyond the excesses, and foibles, and boastful delusions of our youth, we shall settle down to the proper work, and the enduring triumphs of our national manhood.







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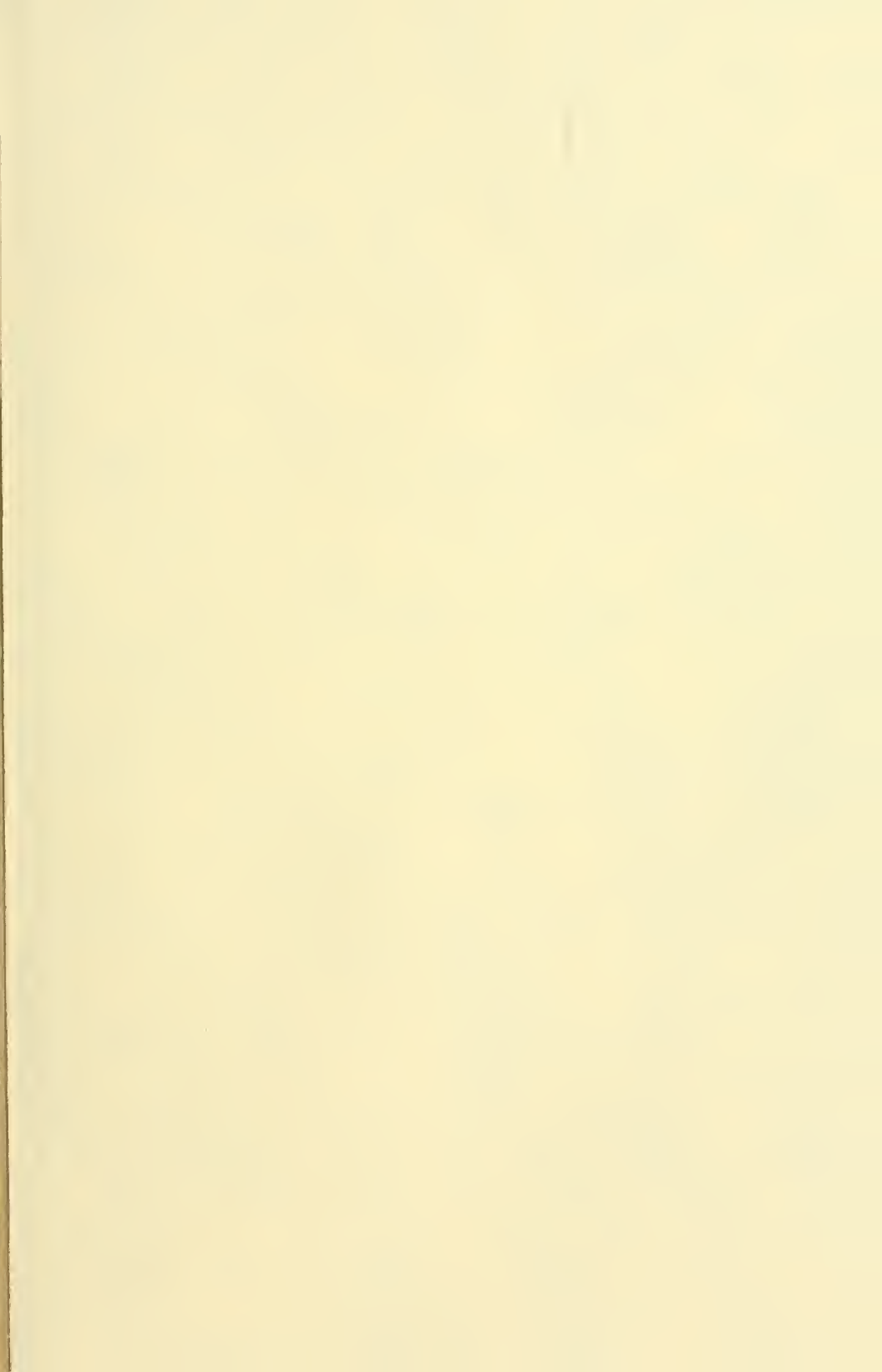
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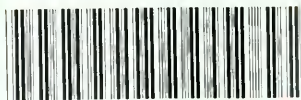
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